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KING ASSASSINATION: FBI doubts agent's conspiracy evidence

The FBI said Wednesday it does not believe a former agent who says he removed and kept evidence of a possible assassination conspiracy 30 years ago from James Earl Ray's car.

Donald G. **Wilson,** assigned to the Atlanta FBI office at the time of the April 4, 1968, assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis, said Monday he took two pieces of paper from Ray's white Ford Mustang that had the name Raul on them.

Ray, serving 99 years for King's murder, has long contended he is innocent and was set up by a mysterious gun smuggler he only knew as Raul.

Federal and Tennessee investigators have said they have found no evidence that Raul existed.

On Wednesday, the FBI said it still doesn't believe Raul existed nor **Wilson**'s allegations concerning the two slips of paper.

"It's a total fabrication," said FBI spokesman Frank Scafidi. "This guy **Wilson** did not have a role in the inventory, the processing or the recovery of James Earl Ray's vehicle."

Scafidi referred to FBI records that indicate **Wilson** was not one of the agents who inspected the car after it was found at an Atlanta parking lot and impounded April 11, 1968.

Two agents who searched the car were quoted Wednesday in a Memphis newspaper as saying that they don't recall **Wilson** and that he played no role in the vehicle's examination.

But **Wilson,** reached by telephone at his suburban Chicago home, said he is not mentioned in the FBI records because he wasn't one of the agents who dismantled the car in the basement of a downtown federal building. He obtained the evidence, he said, much earlier, before the car was towed away from the parking lot.

"I am not the least bit surprised that the FBI records don't mention me," he said. "The FBI has an established historical record regarding untoward conduct and the accuracy of its records."

Wilson said he accompanied one or two other agents, whose names he does not recall, to the parking lot to examine the Mustang. After opening one of the car doors, **Wilson** said, he immediately saw the evidence. **Wilson** maintains he did not turn the papers over to his superiors because he did not believe the FBI was conducting a credible investigation and he could not trust his bosses.

The originals, he said, are secreted in a bank vault. A photocopy of one slip looks like an itemized list with five

words with figures that appear to be dollar amounts. At the bottom there's a word that looks like Raul.

The second slip also contains the name Raul, along with a phone number that apparently can be traced to Jack Ruby and the Vegas Club in Dallas. Ruby was arrested in 1963 for killing Lee Harvey Oswald, the man arrested for the assassination of President Kennedy.

Wilson said he wants to turn the papers over to Attorney General Janet Reno.

He said he decided to come forth with the information last year after seeing requests by the King family that Ray be allowed to have the trial he passed up when he pleaded guilty in 1969. When it became evident this year that Ray would not obtain that trial, **Wilson** said, he decided to make the information public.

FBI spokesman Scafidi said Wednesday the bureau has no interest in examining the documents.

That's typical, **Wilson** said, accusing the FBI of attacking the credibility of anyone with unfavorable information.

"If the bureau was seriously interested in a search for the truth, " **Wilson** said, "the normal first response would be to want to see whatever evidence existed to see if there's any value, regardless of the source."

In another development, one of Ray's lawyers said Wednesday that he filed a clemency petition with the Tennessee Board of Paroles asking that Ray be released on medical grounds.

Ray, 70, is suffering from terminal liver disease and has been hospitalized more than a dozen times in the past 15 months.

"James needs every shot he can get," said attorney Andrew Hall of Wartburg, Tenn.

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